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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 EB-07 TRSE-00 PM-04
NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00
AID-05 /078 W
----------021134Z 034732 /13
R 020757Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2897
INFO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 4896

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SO, IR
SUBJ: FOREIGN MINISTER KHALATBARY'S VISIT TO SOMALIA

REF: MOGADISCIO 0868

1. CALLED ON MFA UNDERSECRETARY JAFAR NADIM MORNING OF JUNE 2 TO GET A READ-OUT ON HIS AND FOREIGN MINISTER KHALATBARY'S RECENT VISIT TO SOMALIA. NADIM SAID THAT IN 48 HOURS IT DIFFICULT TO GET A FIRM FIX ON THE SITUATION BUT WANTED US TO HAVE THEIR IM-
PRESSIONS FOR WHAT THEY WERE
PRESSIONS FOR WHAT THEY WERE WORTH. IN THE FIRST PLACE, ONE OF THE MOST VIVID IMPRESSIONS WAS THAT THE SOMALIS ARE DEVOUTLY MUSLIM, CHAUVINISTIC, AND COMMUNIST, AND THAT THEY SEE NO CONTRA-
DICTIONIN THIS SET OF CONVICTIONS. HE SAID THAT PRESIDENT SIAD BARRE TOLD KHALATBARY THAT HE HAD NO RPT NO QUARREL WITH THE SOVIET UNION WHO HAD BEEN GENEROUS IN PROVIDING SOMALIA WITH NO-STRINGS ATTACHED ASSISTANCE AFTER SOMALIA HAD BEEN TURNED DOWN BY THE WEST AND CHINA. SOMALIA'S ONLY CONCERN VIS-A-VIS THE SOVIET UNION WAS ITS GROWING RELATIONSHIP WITH ETHIOPIA AND WHAT THIS MAY LEAD TO IN TERMS OF CONTESTED TERRITORIES IN ERITREA AND OGADEN. FOR THIS REASON AND THIS REASON ALONE, SOMALIA WAS AGAIN TURNING TO THE WEST FOR
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MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. WITH RESPECT TO MILITARY ASSISTANCE, THE SOMALIAS HAD MADE CLEAR TO KHALATBARY THAT THEY DID NOT EXPECT MUCH FROM IRAN ALTHOUGH THEY DID PRESENT A MODEST, INDEED ALMOST INSIGNIFICANT, LIST OF MILI-
TARY HARDWARE IRAN MIGHT PROVIDE IF IT WERE ABLE. THIS INCLUDED A THOUSAND OR SO RIFLES AND A MODEST AMOUNT OF AMMUNITON. NADIM SAID THAT HE THOUGHT SOMALIA WAS LOOKING

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MORE INTENTLY AND HOPEFULLY TO US AND OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE
WEST TO MEET ITS MAJOR MILITARY REQUIREMENTS.

2. AS FAR AS ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE WAS CONCERNED AND/OR
FUNDING TO FINANCE MILITARY PURCHASES, SOMALIA WAS LOOKING
PRINCIPALLY TO SAUDI ARABIA. PRESIDENT BARRE COMPLAINED,
HOWEVER, THAT THE SAUDIS CAME TO SOMALIA AND WERE CRITICAL OF
SOMALIA'S EVIDENT ATTACHMENT TO XOMMUNIST DOCTRINE AND IMPLIED
RATHER CLEARLY THAT SAUDI ASSISTANCE WAS NOT LIKELY TO BE
FORTHCOMING UNTIL SOMALIA RETURNED TO TRUE ISLAMIC TENETS
IN WHICH COMMUNISM HAD NO PLACE. IT WAS NADIM'S IMPRESSION
THAT THIS WAS NOT LIKELY TO BECOME A CONCESSION SOMALIA
WERE WILLING TO MAKE IN RETURN FOR SAUDI LARGESSE. INTER
ALIA HE REMARKED THAT HE HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT SOMALIS
HARBORED NO LOVE AT ALL FOR THE ARABS AND THAT THE ONLY
THING THAT BOUND THEM TOGETHER AND ANIMATED ANY DIALOGUE
WAS THEIR DEDICATION TO ISLAMIC SOLIDARITY. ACCORDING TO
NADIM, THE SOMALIS DID NOT PRESS THE IRANIANS HARD FOR
ASSISTANCE AND SEEMED TO ACCEPT THE IRANIAN POSITION THAT
SOMALIA SHOULD LOOK FIRST TO SUDAN, EGYPT AND SAUDI
ARABIA AND BEYOND TO THE WEST TO MEET MOST OF ITS NEEDS.
THIS, NADIM SAID, IS ALSO A POSITION THAT THE SHAH WOULD
LIKE US TO UNDERSTAND. IRAN DID NOT SEE ITSELF GETTING OUT
IN FRONT IN THE SOMALIA SITUATION BUT WOULD BE ABLE TO COME
IN BEHIND ONCE THE OTHER COUNTRIES HE HAD MENTIONED TAKE
THE LEAD.

3. OVERALL, NADIM SAID THAT HE AND KHALATBARY WERE IMPRESSED
BY THE COUNTRY'S PITENTIAL, THE EVIDENT
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INDUSTRIOUSNESS OF ITS PEOPLE, AND UPPERMOST THEIR STRONG
NATIONALISTIC POSTURE. THEY DO NOT LIKE OUTSIDERS, AND
THE ONLY REASON THE SOVIETS HAVE MANAGED AS WELL AS THEY HAVE
IS BECAUSE THEY HAVE PLAYED IT CLEVERLY AND KEPT A VERY LOW
PROFILE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MINISTERIAL VISITS, DEBRIEFINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 02-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TEHRAN04896
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770196-0740
Format: TEL
From: TEHRAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770696/aaaadgey.tel
Line Count: 103
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 1bf14086-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 MOGADISCIO 868
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2298378
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FOREIGN MINISTER KHALATBARY\'S VISIT TO SOMALIA
TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, SO, IR, (KHALATBARI, ABBAS ALI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/1bf14086-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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